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A
DISCOURSE

Of the DESCENT of

The Man-Christ Jesus

FROM

HEAVEN:

TOGETHER

With His ASCENSION to
HEAVEN again.

FROM

JOHN XVI. xxviiij.

WITH

An APPENDIX.

L O N D O N :

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DISCOURSE

Of the Descent of

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FROM

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With His Ascension to

HEAVEN again.

FROM

JOHN XVII. 13.

WITH

An APPENDIX

Shewing the Consistency of the
above Discourse with the
Scriptures.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

T*H E following Discourse is designed as well for Persons of very ordinary Capacities, as for those who have more improved Minds : The main Business of the former Part being of great Importance to be well considered by all, as they would not fall short of those honourable Conceptions of their blessed Redeemer, which are due to Him as Man ; and the Contents of*
A 2 *the*

THE PREFACE.

the Latter, of absolute Necessity to be firmly believed by us, as we would have a Title but to the Name of Christians.

But, whereas in order to the more satisfactory Clearing of the Man-Jesus's Descent from Heaven, it was necessary to insert several Things, which may not be so adapted to the Understandings, or Relish of the vulgar Sort of Readers, as the Discourse generally is; let them not be discouraged from reading on, if they meet with any such; for they will quickly return to what they will

THE PREFACE.

will find, by the Blessing of God, as Edifying and Affecting.

And I make it my earnest Request to those who are of a different Opinion from us, more to consider the Evidence on which our Doctrine is founded, than what Objections may be invented against it: There being scarcely any Notions so plain, as to be incapable of being obscured and called in question; except such as are in the Number of First and Self-evident Principles, or those which are immediate Consequents from them.

THE PREFACE.

I have somewhere met with a Saying of St. Austin to this Purpose, Because thou understandest not what is difficult, wilt thou therefore deny that which is plain? And should we with-hold our Assent from every Proposition, till we are able perfectly to master all Objections that may be raised, we must be arrant Scepticks, if not worse, as to most Things.

If there be Truth in our blunt Proverb, One Fool is able to ask more Questions, than many wise Men can answer; much more is it

THE PREFACE.

it true, that a sharp Wit, or a notable Man at the laudable Gift of Wrangling, may raise such Doubts even upon Certainties, as it may be hard for a rational Head, well stored with Learning too, clearly to resolve. Of what can we be more sure, than of Divine Revelations, or than of this Proposition, God cannot Lye? And yet what Work hath ever been made with such Articles of our Faith, as we have the greatest Evidence of their being revealed by God, and of our not being deceived about the true Sense of them!

The PREFACE.

But the Truth is, the holy Scripture (especially as to a great Part thereof) is so contrived by the Spirit of God, as that there may be an Exercise of Vertue in believing; and so, as that a good Heart doth chiefly qualifie for the Reception of Divine Truths. By a good Heart I mean, that Probity of Mind, which makes Men bent upon impartially enquiring after such Truths, and sincerely desirous to know what are such for the best End, viz. the growing more in Grace and Goodness. For which Reason our Saviour
said

The PREFACE.

*said to his Disciples, John 7.
17. If any Man will do
his Will (ἐθέλει ποιεῖν be wil-
ling to do the Will of God)
he shall know of the Do-
ctrine whether it be of
God, &c. And Chap. 8. 47.
He that is of God (or is of
an obedient Temper) heareth
God's Words, or believeth
them; ye therefore hear
them not, because ye are
not of God. And Ver. 31,
32. If you continue in my
Word, then are you my
Disciples indeed; and you
shall know the Truth, &c.
Or, if it be your Care to
live according to the Light
you*

The PREFACE.

you have received, you shall still know more of Truth ; so much as is needful for you.

And the Worth of this honest Heart (as the Phrase is, Luke 8. 15.) we may learn from that joyful Apostrophe of our Lord, Luke 10. 21.

*In that Hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these Things (or suffered them to be hid) from the Wise and Prudent (the Self-conceited, and those who are wise in their own Eyes) and hast revealed them unto Babes ; such
as*

The PREFACE.

as are humble, modest, and teachable, and give themselves up to the Obedience of Faith, as St. Paul's Phrase is.

Now as to the Doctrine, which takes up the greater Part of this Discourse, my onely Design in the Pains (such as they are) it has cost me, is the doing of greater Honour to our blessed Lord, and the more affecting us with what He has done and suffered for us. And I cannot think, but the most affectionate Lovers of Him will be byassed, by their Love, towards receiving it (with as Good and
Great

The PREFACE.

Great Men, both Ancient and Modern, as the Church of Christ has been blessed with) since, as not the least Ill can come of it, so very great Good may and must, in reference to our Lord, and consequently to our selves, if it be not slightly and superficially assented to.

And I cannot discourage over-curious Inquisitiveness, about Points which are clearly revealed, more effectually in a few Words, than by referring the Reader to the excellent Advice of the wise Son of Sirach, Ecclus 3. 21, &c. with which I conclude my
Pre-

The PREFACE.

Preface, *viz.* Seek not out the Things which are too hard for thee, neither search the Things that are above thy Strength. But what is commanded thee (*and therefore proposed to be believed too*) think thereupon with Reverence ; for it is not needful for thee, to see with thine own Eyes the Things that are in secret. Be not curious in unnecessary Matters ; for mo Things are shewed unto thee than Men understand. For many are deceived by their own vain Opinion, and an evil Suspicion hath
over

The PREFACE.

overthrown their Judgment. Without Eyes thou shalt want Light : Professe not the Knowledge therefore that thou hast not.

Edward Gloucester.

A

DISCOURSE

Of the DESCENT of the

Man-Christ Jesus, &c.

JOHN XVI. xxviii.

*I came forth from the Father, and
am come into the World : Again
I leave the World, and go to the
Father.*

THE Death of our blessed
Lord being just at hand,
He delivered what is
contained in *this* and the Two
foregoing Chapters, to prepare
His Disciples for His Departure
from

from them : And to acquaint them more fully with several Truths of great Importance, which they had, at Times, for Substance heard from Him.

The 14th Chapter begins with a great Cordial, to enable them to bear as became them his leaving of them. *Let not, saith he, your Heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my self; that where I am, there you may be also.* And after this 16th Chapter, the next consists of an admirable Prayer of our Lord, upon the Conclusion of which, begins the Account of the woful Tragedy.

Now

Now in the Words of our
Text.

First, Our Lord minds his Disciples of what he had often told them, *viz. from whence he came. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World.*

Secondly, He informs them *whither he was going. Again I leave the World and go to the Father.*

First, He minds them *from whence he came into the World.* And among other Places wherein he declares he came from Heaven, from God the Father *there,* he doth so, *John 6. 33. The Bread of God is he who cometh down from Heaven, and giveth Life unto the World. And v. 35. Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life. v. 38. I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me. V. 41,*
B 42.

42. *The Jews murmured at him, because he said I am the Bread which came down from Heaven. And they said is not this Jesus the Son of Joseph, whose Father and Mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from Heaven? And v. 50, 51, 58. our Lord repeateth the same Thing.*

And St. John the Baptist, who had professed that he was not the Christ; and that *He it is who coming after him is preferred before him, whose Shoes Latchet he was not worthy to unloose, John 1. 27. as he saith, v. 30. that he was before him, tho' he came after him, so he describeth him by Him that cometh down from Heaven, Chap. 3. 31. He that cometh from Above is above all: He that is of the Earth is Earthly, and speaketh of the Earth. (speaketh onely Humane Things, not the Mysteries of the*
Di-

Divine hidden Counsel) *He that cometh from Heaven is above all.*

Now whereas the *Jews* thought this a Thing incredible, because they knew (as they presumed) his Father, and *did* know his Mother; the Incredibility of *his coming down from Heaven* will cease, upon being satisfied, that at the Forming of his Body in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, his *Soul* came from Heaven and entered into it.

And how can we better understand those Words, *Hebr. 10. 4, &c.* than to make them a Proof that so it did? *It is not possible*, saith the Apostle here, *that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the World* (εἰς τὸν κόσμον, or coming down into this lower World) *he saith,*

Both *Piscator* and *Gerhard* expound it, *Prænnuncians se tandem iugresurum*; Fore-declaring that he was now at length upon coming.

*Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldest
not, but a Body hast
thou prepared me † : in
Burnt - Offerings and
Sacrifices for Sin, thou
hast had no Pleasure.*

† Or wilt pre-
pare for me;
the common
Enallage.

*Then said I, Lo, I come (in the Vo-
lume of the Book it is written of me)
to do thy Will, O God.*

This is a Citation of a Pro-
phetical Passage, *Psal. 40. 6, &c.*
concerning the *Messias*; where
we read *but my Ears hast thou
opened* : And instead of *those*
Words the Apostle hath *these*,
but a Body hast thou prepared me,
which is the 70^s Version or
Sense of them. And, not to
trouble you with the Conjectures
of Criticks concerning *those*, it is
enough to say that the Apostle
would not have exchanged them
for *these*, had it not been appro-
ved of by the holy Spirit that
inspired him. We

We see, *this Body prepared by God* was that which was to be offered in the Place of the legal Sacrifices, and the 9th and 10th Verses do farther clear it. Where, after a Repetition of those Words of Him who was to assume this Body, *Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God*, it follows, *He taketh away the First, that he may establish the Second*; or, *the first Sacrifices*, that he may establish the *second Sacrifice*, which was to supply the Defects of all the Other. And the Apostle proceeds *thus*, *By which Will we are sanctified*, our Sins are expiated, *through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all*.

It is a very natural Interpretation of these Words, *A Body hast thou prepared me, &c.* to understand them as spoken by the Human Soul of the *Messias*, except

cept it can be demonstrated that it was not created but in the Womb : Which, *who* would attempt to do ? But doth it not plainly appear, that 'twas created in *Heaven* (and *that* before the Creation of the Earth at least,) from *this* his Petition to his Father, *John* 17. 5. *Glorifie thou me with thine own self ; with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was ?* Of which more anon.

The *Socinians* will have our blessed Lord to mean in those Words, The Glory which he had in the Divine Decree, not *actually*, before the World was. But, without doubt, they would not have thought of such a Meaning, were it not necessary to the Answering an otherwise invincible Argument against their great and peculiar Hypothesis.

They

They confirm this their Sense from *Rev. 13. 8.* where Christ is called, *The Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*: Which they take for granted must be the Lamb decreed so long since to be slain. But we do not take this for granted, there being very learned Men that understand it otherwise; viz. That there is a *Transposition* in this Verse; and so they will have these Words to be read with a Parenthesis thus, ---- *Whose Names are not written (in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain) from the Foundation of the World.* That is, are not written from the Foundation of the World, or were never written. Both Dr. Hammond and Grotius do make from the Foundation of the World to relate to are not written, not to the Lamb slain, or that was slain. And this Sense evidently

B 4

dently appears to be the true One, from *Rev.* 17. 8. where it is, *Whose Names are not written in the Book of Life, from the Foundation of the World.* These Transpositions or Trajections are not unusual in other Places; and I think are chiefly to be found in *St. Paul's* Stile.

And that our Lord *came forth from the Father* in his *Human Nature*, may farther be proved from what himself saith, *John* 3. 13. *No Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven:* And *who* is he that came down from Heaven? It follows, *Even the Son of Man who is in Heaven.* Or, *who was in Heaven*; for there is no Reason why we should not admit this change of the Tense *here*, according to the *Hebrew* Idiom, which (with the Change of Persons

[11]

sons also, and Numbers; and Genders, and Voices) often occurs in the New Testament, and the Old too. Nothing is * more common than the Changing of one *Tense* for another.

* *Erasmus* renders the *is* in *Heaven* as I have done. His Words are, *Qui erat in Cælo*, viz. an-

tequam descenderat. Who was in Heaven, viz. before he descended.

And what can be plainer to this Purpose, than is our blessed Saviour's Question, *John 6. 62?* *What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up, where he was before?* Where this *Son of Man* was before. And if this *Son of Man* may be said to come down from Heaven, because the *Second Person* of the Trinity did (if he did) before their Union; for the same Reason, upon Supposition of his *Soul's* coming thence, his *Body* may

may be said to do so too, because of the Union that was between them after his Soul's coming down. But who sees not how such a Saying as *this* would be reflected on ?

But there is no whit more of Absurdity or Impropriety in saying, that the *Son of Man* came down from Heaven if his *Soul* did, than in saying that such a *Man* did if his *Soul* did. But who will carp at *such* an Expression ? Nothing being more common, than to give even the Body the Name of the Man whose it is. As we say, *Such a Man is dead : Such a Man is in his Grave.* I need not say that *this* is also a *Scripture* Form of Words ; nothing of the Man appearing to our outward Sense but the Body.

And

And yet, notwithstanding this vulgar Way of speaking, the Wisest of the old Philosophers would by no means have the Body to be a constituent Part, but the Soul onely to be the Man.

It was a great Maxim with them, that *Every Man's Mind is himself*. And that *A Man's Body is not he but his*.

Animus cujusque est quisque
Σὺ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦδε σώματος.

That the Body is not, strictly speaking, any other but the Man's House ; which is no more a Part of him, tho' vitally united to him, than is the *Shell* a Part of the *Snail*.

And doth not St. Peter's Notion of the Body look like this, in that he calls *his* Body his *Tabernacle*, 2 Ep. 1. 13, 14. And St. Paul's too, in calling our Body the *Earthly House of our Taber-*

bernacle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. and *this Tabernacle*, v. 4. ?

That brave Man *Anaxarchus*,
while the Cyprian
Tyrant was pound-
ing him in a
Trough, cried out
to him, *Pound*,
pound the Leathern Bag of *Anax-*
archus ; *thou poundest not Anax-*
archus.

Tunde, tunde fol-
lem Anaxarchi,
Anaxarchum non
tundis.

In short, it is both unphilosophical, and unlike a Christian, to condemn giving to the Soul the Name of Man ; or calling a separate Soul a Man unbodied, or out of *this* Body.

Nay, the most Divine of the Philosophers, *Plato* and his Followers, did look on *Men* as scarce deserving the Title, till got *rid* of these Bodies : Which they would have not onely to be our Houses, but likewise our Pri-

Prisons ; by our Deliverance out of which we gain abundantly the *freer* use of our Faculties. Nay, they would say, that we never truly *live*, till let loose from these Bodies by *their* Death. And the Book called *The Wisdom of Solomon* teacheth the same Doctrine in *these* Words, *The corruptible Body presseth down the Soul, and the Earthy Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind, that museth upon many Things*, Ch. 9. 15.

But whether the Body may properly be said, to be a Part of the Man or not, I hope it will be acknowledged that the Soul is *that* Part which denominates the Man ; and which doth, essentially at least, distinguish the *Species*, *Animal Rationale* being his Definition. And consequently our Saviour spake most properly, which is what I drive at,
in

in his Declarations that he came down from Heaven, if his *Soul* did.

If it be objected, That tho' his *Soul* in Heaven might be called a *Man*, it could not have the Appellation of *Son of Man*, till after his Conception in the Womb; but, as was now shew'd, he not onely said, *I came down from Heaven*, but likewise that the *Son of Man* did. And therefore if by the *Son of Man*, he could not mean himself according to his *Human* Nature in *those* Declarations; How can we be confident he meant himself in *that* Sense in any *other*?

I answer, That there appears to be nothing in this Objection, in that *Man* and *Son of Man* are synonymous, or of the self-same Signification, in our Saviour's Stile; as they are so too in the
Jewish

Jewish Dialect ; of which we have innumerable Instances in the Old Testament.

As to their signifying the same Thing in the Stile of our *Saviour*, we find he could scarcely speak of himself upon *any* Occasion, in the *Third* Person (so wonderful was his Condescension) but by *this* Title, *the Son of Man* ; although, even as the Son of *Man*, he was much more the Son of *God* than of *Man*, as being conceived by God the Holy Ghost. Upon *which* Account expressly, the Angel told his blessed Mother, That *the Holy Thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God*, Luke 1.35.

And I am beholden to my *Concordance* for *this* Observation, that *Ezekiel* is called in his Prophecy about *Eighty Nine* times the *Son of Man* : And *Jesus Christ* is so
no-

nominated about *Eighty* times in the *Evangelists*.

So that the Argument for the *Man-Christ's* coming down from Heaven, taken from his so often declaring, that *He* did, is not in the least weakened by his also saying, that the *Son of Man* did; since we see no Emphasis or Weight is to be laid upon the Phrase, *Son of Man*, to distinguish it from the Word *Man*.

But to put the great Point in hand still *more* out of doubt, if it be possible (as I scarce think it is) the Apostle *St. Paul*, comparing *Adam* and our *Saviour* together, saith, *The First Man is of the Earth earthy* (or was so) *the Second Man is the Lord from Heaven*. 1 Cor. 15. 47. And *Eph. 4. 9, 10*. He saith, *Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower Parts*
of

of the *Earth*? But it may perhaps be objected against making those Words a Confirmation of our Doctrine, that the Apostle speaks *only* of Christ's descending into the *lower Parts of the Earth*; which some understand to be the *Virgin's Womb*, or the *Grave*, or both. But, be this as it will, if he meant not His coming down from Heaven to the Earth *indefinitely*, but only into some particular Part or Parts thereof, this his Arguing will be justly liable to Exception. For how doth it follow, that because Christ ascended, therefore He must first have descended into the *lower Parts of the Earth* in such a restrain'd Sense? When His Ascension can necessarily presuppose no more than His having descended into this lower World. And so Dr. *Hammond* understands the

C Phrase,

Phrafe, tho' he mentions the other Sense too. Here is the common Change of *Numbers*, the Singular into the Plural, *Parts* put for *Part*. And *Grotius* upon the Place expounds *into the lower Parts of the Earth, in eam partem in qua Homines solent vivere: Into that Part of the Earth in which Men are wont to live*; opposing it to the Mountain to which God first descended.

So that it is as plain as can be from those Words, That He who descended from Heaven is the same with Him, who afterwards ascended: But it was the *Man* Jesus that ascended, and therefore the same Man descended. But here is no Need of a *Therefore*, or of making this a Consequence from that Premise; for, tho' there cannot be a plainer, the Apostle contented not himself

self herewith, but in the *next* Verse turns those Words *thus*, *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all Heavens (or into the Heaven of Heavens) that He might fill (or fulfil) all Things.* And one would be apt to conclude, that the Apostle must needs have had in his Mind some very *special* Reason for so *singular* a Thing as this *turning* his Words immediately: And *what* can we imagine should be his *special* Reason so *easily*, as *that* which we must needs *wot* of?

We have another as plain a Proof as *any* of our Doctrine, in 2 Cor. 8. 9. which shall be consider'd in the *Application* thereof.

Some of the *Socinians*, to evade the Force of the many Texts which appear (at least to *me*) as plain as Words can make any thing for Christ's *Humanity's* De-

ſcent from Heaven, have light upon a ſtrange Invention, *viz* That He aſcended Soul and Body into Heaven, juſt before His ſhewing Himſelf publickly to the World, and entering upon His Miniſtry, to receive His Goſpel from God; as the Prophet *Moses* aſcended up to the Mount, to receive his *Law* from Him.

But *well* may this be called an Invention, and a bold one, there not being one Syllable of any ſuch Thing recorded by either of the *Four* Evangeliſts; nor any where to be ſeen in the Apoſtles Writings. And who can reaſonably imagine there ſhould be a perfect Silence as to ſo auguſt a Matter of Fact, as *Jeſus* His going up from any Part of *Judea* to Heaven, and coming down thither again, were there any Truth in it? And eſpecially when there

there are not a few Narratives in the Gospels, of Passages which are compar'd with this of no Moment.

And from what is laid before you, it is not to me more evident, that *that Socinian Account* of our Lord's Descent from Heaven is a Fiction, than that His many Declarations thereof, are *not* onely to be understood, of a Descent of the Second Person of the glorious Trinity, to whom His Human Nature is united. For how could this Person in the God-Head be call'd the *Son of Man*, or the *Second Man*? Or, *indeed*, how could *He* be properly said to come down from Heaven, or to come down Personally, who could not for a Moment be *out* of Heaven, any more than God the *Father*, from whom *He* is inseparable? Nor could *He* for that Reason be said

to come forth from the Father, except by necessary *Emanation*, as Light from the Sun. We read, I confess, of God's coming down upon Mount *Sinai*; but *this* His coming down is commonly held to be by his glorious Angels. And whereas 'tis said, That God spake to *Moses* and the Children of *Israel*, it is express'd, that He did so from Heaven; tho', as I need not say, the whole Universe is filled with his Presence. To make therefore all the foresaid Declarations of our Lord, to be onely understood in the now-mention'd Sense, seems to offer such a Violence to them, as *no* Words can have a greater Put upon them: And to *me* it more than seems to speak him not to have come from Heaven in *Person*, as often as he declar'd that Himself did.

But

But I am one of those who heartily embrace the Opinion of the ancient Fathers, That God's coming down upon the Mount was *Personal*, they taking God for the God-Man. Of which more presently.

We will farther observe, that the great Point we are upon, was a Doctrine of the ancient *Jewish* Church : And agreeably thereto the excellent Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, Chap. 8. 19. brings in the *Wise Man* thus speaking, *I was a witty, or understanding, Child, and had a good Spirit : Yea rather, being good, I came into a Body undefiled.*

It seems very reasonable to suppose, that K. *Solomon* is represented speaking those Words, as he was an eminent *Type* of the *Messias*, considering their well known Notion of the Pre-existence of his Human Soul. C 4 There

There is a notable Tradition, answerable to that Notion, cited in an ancient Book among the *Jews*, called *Pesikta*, viz. That after God had created the World, He put His Hand under the Throne of His Glory, and brought out the Soul of the Messiah, with all His Attendants, and said unto Him : Wilt Thou heal and redeem my Sons after 6000 Years? He answer'd, I am willing so to do. Again therefore, said God unto Him, And art thou willing to suffer Chastizements, for the purging away of their Iniquities? And the Soul of the Messiah answered, I will suffer them, and that with all my Heart.

Vide Hulsium de Messia, p. 309.

And there is a Cabbalistical Representation of their expected *Messias* his being in Heaven, in another old Book of high Esteem among the *Jews*, intituled, *Midrash*

*drash Conen, viz. That in Fol. 3. Col. 2.
 the Fifth House built of
 the Stones of Sohan and Jaspar, &c.
 (so Metaphorically and Mystical-
 ly is one of the Cœlestial Man-
 sions described) sits the Messias,
 Son of David (with others) and
 that there he is placed in a Taber-
 nacle of the Wood of Libanum, like
 that made by Moses in the Desert.
 That Elias of blessed Memory said
 to this Messias, Bear the Stroke and
 Judgment of the Lord, which he in-
 flicts (or will inflict) upon Thee for
 the Sin of Israel; as it is written by
 Isaiah, He hath been (or shall be)
 wounded because of our Prevarication,
 and stricken because of our Iniquities.
 And that Moses and Aaron, Da-
 vid and Solomon came to honour
 him, and did shed Tears with him.
 And that they comforted him, and
 said to him, Bear the Bruize of thy
 Lord, because the End is near at
 Hand,*

and the Chains about thy Neck will be broken, &c. This is the Substance of the Tale; but it shews, like the *other*, their ancient Notion of the Pre-existence of their *Messias* (*viz.* of his Soul) in Heaven.

And agreeably to this Tradition, the ancient *Jews* held, that it was the *λογος*, the Divine Word, that appear'd to the *Patriarchs*, &c. as the most Learned Dr. *Allix* hath largely shew'd in his Book, intitled, *The Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church*, &c.

See Chap. 16,
& 20.

That it was *He* who gave the Law to the *Israelites*; and who created the Voice, which was heard by them; and who had before deliver'd them from their Captivity in *Egypt*. That they held him to be God: That *Philo*, particularly, calls him, *The Eternal*

ternal Son of God, and yet saith, that he was a Man; and makes those Words, Zech. 5. 12. Behold the Man whose Name is the Branch, to be meant of Him: And that He is the Mediator between God and Men: That he was Prince of the Angels; the Light and Doctor of His People; the Prophet of God; the True and Eternal Priest, &c.

And the like is to be said of the Judgment of the ancient *Christian Fathers*, which is too well known to need saying much of it. *They*, as well as the *Jewish Church*, make *Him*, who appearing to *Abraham, Jacob, Moses and Joshua*, was ador'd by them, to be the *Messiah*; whom one while they call the *Word*, expressing the

Vide *Iust. Mart.* pag. 337. *Irenai, Lib. 4. Cap. 11. 21. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 1. c. 2.*

Mes-

Messiah by his principal Part : Another while they call him *Christ*, and *Jesus Christ*, and him who was born of a *Virgin*, as *Justin Martyr* in his *Dialogue with Tripho*. And, as *Grotius* saith of the Word *Christ*, that it is *Nomen Hominis*, so I find it called *Vocabulum Humanæ Naturæ* by *Tertullian*.

I will here take Notice of what the excellent Bishop of *Ely* saith in his Commentary upon the Book of *Joshua*, on the 14th Verse of the 5th Chapter. Upon the *Man's* appearing to *Joshua*, and saying, *As Captain of the Host of the Lord am I now come*, and *Joshua's* falling on his Face to the Earth, and doing *Worship*, his *Lordship* saith as follows : ' Which he durst not have
' given (for God alone is to be
' ador'd) nor would an Angel
' have received, without such a
' Check as an Angel gave *St. John*
Rev.

(Rev. 22. 10.) if he had not
 taken *him* to be the Divine
 Word, that was to come to fight
 for them. So the *Chaldee* Para-
 phrase upon *Josh.* 10. 42. *It was*
the Word of the Lord that fought
for them; according to God's
 Promise, 1. 9. 17. This a most
 Learned Friend of mine (Dr. *Al-*
lix) shews was the Judgment of
 the Ancient *Jewish* Church (see
 his late Book on that Argument,
 p. 234.) and it is most certain
 was the Judgment of the An-
 cient Christians; particularly
 of *Justin Martyr*, *Eusebius* and
Theodoret. And therefore our
 great Primate of *Ireland* fears
 not to say in his *Annals*, *Jesus*
Dominus Noster, &c. *Jesus our*
Lord, the Prince of his Father's Host,
appearing to him, who was a Type
of Him, at Jericho, with a drawn
Sword, promised to be the Defend-
 er

er of the People. And therefore I fear not to say, that his Grace must have believed our Doctrine concerning the Soul of Jesus. A Man of his extraordinary Learning, could not have called this Captain of the Lord's Host, our Lord *Jesus*, if he onely meant that he was the Second Person of the Trinity; who could not be our Lord *Jesus* in any other Sense, than as the Soul of *Jesus* was in a Personal Union with him.

And who can fear to say, *that* glorious Defender of the People of *Israel* was *Jesus our Lord*, after St. *Paul* had said, that *he* was *Christ*, whom they tempted in the Wilderness, as he doth in 2 *Cor.* 9. 10? As also St. *Paul* supposeth, *Heb.* 12. 25, 26. (for which I am beholden to Dr. *Allix*) that 'twas *Christ* who utter'd that Voice upon Mount *Sinai*.

If it be said, that the *Jews* had a Tradition of the Pre-existence of *all* Human Souls *one where or other*, as well as of the Soul of the *Messias* in *Heaven*, I will onely reply to *this*, that we have nothing to do with *that* : The Pre-existence of *His* Soul being not at all concern'd in its being true or false. For, as there were many Things *peculiar* to our Lord's Person, and particularly his Conception in the Womb of a *Virgin*, by the Over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost, both to preserve his Body from the original Pollution of all the Sons of *Adam*, and to make him as *Man* above *our* Reach in a higher Sense the Son of God, than *Adam* himself was ; Why might it not likewise be his *sole* Prerogative, that his *Soul* should exist in Union with God's *Eternal* Son

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in Heaven, before its Union with an Earthly Body? And *this* to render the God-Man capable of this Humiliation he was to undergo; it being impossible for mere Deity to be a Subject of Humiliation. And the Descent from Heaven, as it must then have been in *it self* a marvellous Humiliation to our Saviour, so much more must it have been so, as design'd to forego not a few other not to be parallell'd Instances thereof.

The Author of *No Pre-Existence*, as very zealous as he was in opposing *That* of *all* Souls, saith he *readily yields, that the Soul of Christ was long extant before it was incarnate: Because He was a peculiar Favourite of God; was to undergo bitter Sufferings for Mankind; and therefore should enjoy a happy Pre-Existence for an Anti-Præmium.*

mium. And since He was to purchase a Church with His own most precious Blood, it was fit He should pre-exist from the Beginning of the World, that He might preside over his Church as Guide and Governour thereof; which is a Thing that cannot be said of any other Soul beside. But waving the Consideration of these Reasons for it, Oh, how doth this Doctrine superadd to the Profoundness of our Lord's Humility, and the Wonderfulness of his Self-Denial! How doth it also farther heighten the Merit of the Man Jesus his Obedience and Submission to his Heavenly Father; and more magnifie his Charity and Compassion to miserable Sinners! And consequently how much more cogent and powerful Motives have we from hence, to endeavour to excel in those Divine Graces; as mighty strong
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ones as his Example hath given us, without the Consideration of such a Doctrine as this is!

And to be more *particular*, That our Blessed Lord should descend from his glorious Mansion into this dark Region: Take here a Body of Flesh from the Womb of a poor Virgin: Be in this Body subject to all Bodily Infirmities: Be a *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs*: Live, as well as be born, in the most despicable Circumstances: And, in Conclusion, be made a Sacrifice for our Sins upon a tormenting Cross; *bearing our Sins in his Body on the Tree*, and be substituted in the Place of Sinners, tho' a spotless Lamb, which is the lowest Humiliation of all: And submit to all this (which contains many *more* Particulars, some of which are hereafter to be mention'd) most wil.

willingly, nay gladly ; as is express'd in the foresaid Prophetical Passage of the *Psalmist*, where he is introduced thus speaking, *I delight to do thy Will, O God ; that Will of God, that he should take a Body, and be made a Sacrifice therein ; Yea, thy Law, this Law of Thine, is in my Heart ;* or, as it is in the *Margin*, *in the Midst of my Bowels* : Which speaks the most chearful Compliance that can be express'd.

Oh, with how high Admiration, with how profound Adoration, should these Things be contemplated !

And certainly, whoever makes any *Doubt* of this Doctrine, the better Christian he is, the more strongly will he be inclined to *wish*, that it may prove true ; instead of stretching his Wits upon

the Rack to obscure the plainest Texts of Scripture.

That which makes many well minded Men averse to the Receiving of it, is, a Jealousie that the Pre-existence of *all* Souls may be inferr'd from it, because some have made it a great Argument for it; and *this* is a Notion they cannot away with. But I hope, enough hath been said to make them sensible, that *they fear where no Fear is*: And, that there may not be the least *Shadow* of Truth in this Notion, while *our* Doctrine does shine as bright as the Sun at Noon.

Can any one think, our Creator must necessarily make *all* Souls to pre-exist, if He hath made *one*; especially, if there be no greatly important Reason why *all* should? Were there not *more* convincing

vincing Arguments for it than *this* is (which, whether there be or not, we must not *now* stand to consider) it ought not to be contended for.

So that, laying aside this *Fear*, I *must* repeat it, that our well weighing what has been discoursed, must needs incline us very much to *wish* to have our Doctrine true, if not come up to complete Satisfaction concerning it.

I, for my Part, am tempted to say of it what honest *Tully* did of the *Immortality of the Soul*, *Si in hoc erro, &c.* If I err in this Point, I err willingly, nor will I while I *breath* suffer this Error, Extorqueri, to be wrested by main Force from me.

To say a few Words more concerning the ancient Tradition the *Jewish* Church had of this Doctrine,

ctrine, It is not easie to think it should have been of so great Antiquity, as that it cannot be traced back to its first Original, if it were a mere Fiction ; since it doth such superlative Honour to our Lord as *Man*, and in all He did and suffer'd as our Redeemer ; and hath so many highly valuable Consequences, which at the first Sight do offer themselves ; and which must necessarily have a blessed Influence upon such as believe it, and well consider it.

And why might not this Tradition have come down from the *Patriarchs*, as well as that of the Eternal Reward of pious Souls in Heaven ; which we generally conceive the *Jews* had handed from *them* to them ; there being no expresse Promise thereof in the Law of *Moses* ; but, at best, it was

was obscurely vail'd therein under Types and Shadows ?

Nor is it hard to suppose, that in Time the Fanciful *Rabbins* might graff upon the Pre-existence of the Soul of their *Messias*, the Pre-existence of *all* Souls; as *Pythagoras* may be supposed to do upon *this*, his absurd Doctrine of their *Transmigration*.

But, as to the *Universal* Pre-existence, as difficult as it is to make it an Article of our Faith, we should be obliged not to question it, were it as plainly deliver'd in Scripture as *that* of the Soul of the *Messias* is.

Yet, after all, I will not say, there's an absolute Necessity in order to the making out of this Doctrine, That *His* Soul onely should have the Privilege of Pre-existence. For why may there

not be an Order of *Angels* of the self-same Nature with Humane Souls, and differing from them onely in their never having been designed for Terrestrial Bodies: And to which the Guardianship of their own *Species* on Earth may have been especially committed, as having the *most* natural Affection and Concern for them? And upon God the Father's declaring His most gracious Pleasure, that He would have one of *these* undertake the Redemption of their apostate Brethren, by becoming *in all Things like to them, Sin excepted*; *This* blessed Soul, being one of *this* Order, and the *Chief* of them, might immediately, with the greatest Alacrity, offer Himself to take on Him this Office; or comply with this His Heavenly Father's Pleasure, according to the fore-mention'd Words of
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the *Psalmist*, and the Author to the *Hebrews*, and the now recited ancient *Tradition* : And might thereupon be united to the *Logos*, to qualifie Him for the *Whole* of of this Mighty and Super-Angelical Undertaking.

I should incline to *this* as no unreasonable Supposition ; but I cannot conceal it, that I would not forsake the most obvious Meaning of *John* 1. 10. compar'd with *Col.* 1. 15, 16, 17. for the sake thereof. Which is, that our Saviour, according to His *Humane* Nature, was the *First* of God's Creation, and united to God's Eternal Son before He created the Angels themselves. And, without doubt, it may well be supposed, that this glorious united Spirit might be perfectly of the same Nature with *our* Souls ; and that he *was* so, to have properly

perly the Denomination of a *Man*. I am perswaded, I shall not be over confident, if I affirm, that more than enough hath been said to induce us, infinitely to prefer this Hypothesis to *that* of our Saviour's Soul's having had no Existence before it was incarnate, even tho' He had never so expressly assur'd us, as He has done, that *He came down from Heaven*.

But as to those *Socinians*, who are Proof against all Arguments that can be offer'd towards their Conviction, I expect they will be the more prejudiced against our Doctrine, for its depriving them of the Advantages they have for the Retorting of the Charge against them of wresting Scripture. Of *this* we will give *Two* or *Three* of the chief Instances, I having more in my Mind.

Where-

Whereas our Lord saith, *John* 8. 58. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am:* Which was His Reply to the *Jews* that said, *Thou art not yet Fifty Years old* (or hast not yet seen so much as half one Age) *and hast thou seen Abraham?*

There are Learned Men who infer from these Words, that our Lord *Christ* is *Jehovah*, because He here gives Himself the Name of *I AM*; by which *Jehovah* told *Moses*, He would be known to the People of *Israel*. Which Name speaks His Eternal and Unchangeable Existence, and His being the Fountain of All-Being.

Now the *Socinians* will have this to be a very forced Interpretation; and I am one of those *Anti-Socinians*, who cannot approve of it; if it were for no
other

other Reason, but that our Lord knew those *Jews* to be utterly unqualified for the receiving of such Doctrine, and therefore they would be the more exasperated thereby, instead of being convinced. As for the *same* Reason, He put them *by* from understanding His highest Meaning in calling Himself the *Son of God*, *John* 10. 35, 36. And 'tis no Argument for their understanding Him in *that* Sense, that they fell into such a Rage as to *take up Stones*, upon those Words, *to cast at Him*, (it is not said, *to stone Him*, as Ver. 31. of that Chapter) for what was *less* than Blasphemy would put them into a Flame against *Him*; and it was enough so to do onely to tell them, that Himself was *elder*, and therefore *greater*, than their Father *Abraham*. And *so* 'tis highly

ly probable they *did* understand Him, it being the plain and natural Sense of the Words ; nothing being more common (as I need not say again) in the Stile of the *Jews*, than the changing one *Tense* for another ; and the *Present* may well be put for the *Imperfect* here, *I am* for *I was*. And *our* Doctrine doth affirm, that *Christ*, as a *Man*, was vastly before *Abraham*.

I need not add, that they as much find Fault with understanding those Words of our Saviour, as signifying His having been before *Abraham*, according to His Divine Nature, or as united to the Second Person ; and do make *this* as strain'd a Sense as the *other*. But, I say, *our* Doctrine gives a Sense, which, if true, leaves no Room for Cavelling.

Again,

Again, whereas these Adversaries make Work, with the Interpreting of the fore-mention'd Petition of our Lord, *Glorifie thou me with the Glory which I had with Thee before the World was*; as meant of the Glory which He had so long since with the Father, as He was united to the *Second Person*: Alledging, that, if there be such a Person, He must needs *always* have had that Glory, and therefore could not pray to be *restored* to it; as we say, He could not as *Man*, because *so* He never had it. But you have seen, that we do not *all* say so. And this Arguing of theirs I cannot despise. But *our* Doctrine will be a *most clear* Answer, till they are able to confute it, which they never will be. However, it hath no Colour of putting any *Force* upon our Lord's Words.

I make those Words, 2 Cor. 8. 9. Another Instance to the same Purpose; but I have already referr'd speaking to this Text to another Place.

I have hitherto taken it for granted, that *Jesus* is united to the Divinity; it not being to be *expected*, that I should undertake the direct Proof thereof upon *this* Argument. But, however, I briefly offer what *follows* as a clear Demonstration of the Truth of this great Doctrine; especially considering it altogether.

1. I can never hope to understand St. *John's* saying, *The Word was made Flesh*, Ch. 1. 14. comparing it with the *Three first* Verses, if there be no Truth in this Article of our Faith. For by *His being made Flesh*, what can be meant but His being *born in*
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Human Flesh ? And how could He be so otherwise, than as He (this *λογος* or *Word*) united the Soul of Jesus which informed this Flesh, unto Himself ? Unless we can imagine, with *Appollinaris*, that *Himself* was the Soul of this Body ; and consequently that *Jesus* never was a Man.

2. The Apostle St. *Paul* plainly asserts this Doctrine, in *Phil.* 2. 6, 7, &c. where, exhorting to the Imitation of Christ Jesus, he saith, *Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, &c.* He did not Ostentate and make a Boast of Equality with God the Father, as Conquerors use to vaunt of *their* Prizes. Or did not, like *Lucifer*, think Equality with Him a Prey or Spoil to be invaded by Him ; in that Sense that *Cicero* said of *Verres* ; *Omnium*

um bona Prædam suam duxit : He looked upon all Mens Property as his Prey. And the Phrase here

ἐχάρταγμα ἐν ἑαυτῷ Grotius saith, is used much in the same Sense by Plutarch. And that by *μορφή θεοῦ* the Form of God, is meant His Essential Form, not a mere outward Resemblance of God, in the Performance of abundance of Divine and Miraculous Works, may not onely be gather'd from the same Word *μορφή* presently after, relating to a *Servant* (and took upon him the Form of a *Servant*) which was far from the mere Appearance of one ; but also, and I think especially, from this Consideration, That the Apostle would have said nothing singular of our Lord as *Man*, were he onely in this Sense in the Form of God. For he might have said the same of *himself*, with his Fel-

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low

low Apostles ; who wrought as great Miracles as their Lord did, and *greater* too, as He promised them they should ; that is, more excellent as to the *Success* of them ; tho' none could be greater in *themselves* than *His* were.

The Primitive Fathers understood this Phrase, *In the Form of God*, in the same Sense, and alledge this Place for the Divinity of our Saviour.

It follows, *But made Himself of no Reputation, &c.* ἐκένωσε, he *emptied* himself. He was so far from boasting of an Equality with God, that he lessen'd, *infinitely* lessen'd, himself, as *this*, with the next Verse, shews.

And the 7th Verse does as plainly prove Christ's Pre-existence in Heaven, as *Man*, as the 6th does his Union with the Divine Word. For how can *He*, who
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is absolutely unchangeable, be said to have *emptied Himself* ? This was absolutely impossible. And besides, in the several Parts of his Humiliation here set down, the 5th Verse shews the Apostle's Design was to make him the more admirable Example to us of Humility ; he ushering in those Parts with this Exhortation, *Let this Mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*. But I am mistaken, if we ever find the Deity propounded to us as an Example of *Humility* ; tho' God commands our Conformity to Himself in Holiness ; and our Lord Jesus requires us to imitate our Heavenly Father in unlimited Charity and Beneficence.

3. What say we to the *Doxologies* given to Jesus Christ, which are as plainly expressive of Divine Worship as Words can make

them ? Surely *these* are as much to the Purpose as can be, for the Proving of this Article of Faith ; they being such as greater are no where given to God the Father.

Such a Doxology is given to our Lord, together with the Father, Rev. 5. 13. ---- *Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be given unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever !*

And Two such are given to him alone. One Ver. 12. And there are joyning in *this* many Angels also, *Saying with a loud Voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing.* The other Rev. 1. 5, 6. --- *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in His own Blood : And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His*
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Father; to Him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

And now what think we? Hath *Idolatry*, which God so severely forbad to his ancient People, and for which they so sorely smarted, ceased to be a Sin since our Saviour's Coming? Nay, is it become a *Duty*; and are we encouraged thereunto by the Example even of the holy *Angels*? This must be true, if Christ hath onely an *Humane* Nature; and he can have no other, if his Soul be not in Union with the Divine *Logos*: Except, as we said, the *Logos* be his *Soul*; and then he has onely the Divine Nature imbodyed: Nay, and except the Deity can be capable of Agonies and Torment; and who will not call *this* a great Blasphemy? I will say nothing of that *mad*

Whim of *Eutyches*, who would have the Two Natures in Christ to be *compounded* and *blended* together.

And to talk of a *made* God, a God made of a mere Creature, by its being indued with Divine Authority, and so made an Object of Divine Worship, what a Reflexion *must* this be upon God the Father; as having thus far cancell'd his Two first Commandments of the Moral Laws. And why may he not also make them *quite* cease to be obliging; and, for the same Reason, the other Eight too? And *so* there is nothing but Arbitrary Pleasure, on which *any* of them are founded. Which I will not suspect those I am now concern'd with do think any more than we do.

And

And thus much may suffice in Reference to our Lord's Divinity.

I will say *this* too to the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, viz. That our Saviour's Form of Baptism *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, doth alone prove it, I mean a *Real*, not a mere *Nominal, Modal, or Sabellian* Trinity. And, in the Opinion of much better Judges than I can pretend to be, the fore-mention'd most Elaborate Account of the *Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church, against the Unitarians, in the Controversie upon the Holy Trinity, and the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour* is abundantly sufficient for ever to silence it.

And I think the *Twenty Eight Propositions* concerning the Trinity do

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sufficiently explain it, according to the Holy Scriptures, and the ancient Fathers, so far as to speak it not contradictory to natural Reason. To which I refer the Reader, with the *Three Defences* of them.

But, to proceed a little farther in our direct and immediate Business. I freely acknowledge, that the Condescension of Christ as Man, is not to be compar'd with his Condescension considered as God. And to ascribe Condescension (tho' not Humiliation) to God, is highly worthy of the Divine Majesty.

As also we must affirm, that our Primary Obligation for our Redemption by Christ, is to God the Father, who sent him, and whose Gift he is. *So God loved the World, that he gave his onely begotten Son, &c.*

And

And again, it must be granted, that Christ, as *God*, gave the *most* glorious Demonstration of Love and Compassion to apostate Mankind ; in that the Deity's Uniting the Humane Nature to it self, was unspeakably more marvellous, than all that Christ did, or *could* undergo as Man.

But we must not endure it, that our Obligation to the *Man Jesus* should in the *least* be made less than it is ; or that he should lose any of the Honour due to him. But to make him, as *Man*, not to have a Being before he was in this World, or not to have come down from Heaven as Man, (if he did) much lessens the Wonderfulness of his Self-Denial for our sake, and therefore of his Love and Charity ; as admirable as it is *however*.

I farther desire it may be well consider'd, that the Union between the Divine Nature and *Him* was not *such*, as either made him merely *Passive* as a Man, in what he did and suffer'd for us; nor *such* neither as made all *that* to be *necessitated*, or void of all Freedom; for *these* both alike destroy our Obligation to him as Man. Nor did this Union make him the *less* free as Man; which, if it did, would so much the more take off from our Obligation. For it is most evident, that the *Logos* was as distinct from *His* Humane Nature, as it is from every one of *ours*, tho' not *separable*. Nor did it communicate any one of its Perfections to his Humanity, one Jot more than our Souls do any of *their* Properties to our Bodies. For we read, that *Jesus encreased in Wisdom and*
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Stature (or Age) and in Favour with God and Man, Luke 2. 52.
 He did *this* as the rest of the Children of Men do.

And it is very observable, that what he had of *Wisdom* or *Power* above the Humane Nature, is not ascribed to this Union, but to the Holy Spirit: Who first descended on him at his Baptism, and with whose Gifts he was furnish'd abundantly beyond any that were before him, or follow'd after him. For, saith St. John, *God giveth not the Spirit by Measure unto him, Chap. 3. 34.* He call'd the *Pharisees* maliciously imputing the Power by which He cast out Devils, to *Belzebub, the Prince of the Devils*, a Blasphemy against the *Holy Ghost*.

As to *Knowledge*, his Disciples said unto him, *Now we are sure that thou knowest all Things, John*
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16, 30. But that the *Man Jesus* did not know all Things, we are sure from his own Words, *Mark* 13. 32. Of that Day and Hour (the precise Time of the End of the World) knoweth no Man; no not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

St. *Irenæus* somewhere speaks to this Purpose, That the *Logos* was silent in Christ; and did not exert the natural Effects of his Personal Union during the Oeconomy of his Humiliation. And I might shew, that St. *Jerom* expresseth himself to the same Effect. I do not concern my self to look out the Places, nor to give these Father's Words, as well as Sense, the Case being too plain to need such Authorities. For what Need could *Jesus* have of the *Third Person's* Communications, if he enjoy'd
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(at least *always*) the powerful Influence of his Union with the *Second* since his Descent from Heaven, and his being under his *humbling* Oeconomy or Dispensation? And his being deprived thereof during *this* Time (either wholly, or in part) might well make another mighty Instance of Humiliation.

And the *Holy Spirit's* now coming down upon him, to supply the Withdrawing of *that* Influence, together with his being *conceived* by him in the Womb of the Virgin, &c. did make *Him* to have his Share, in an eminent manner, in the glorious Work of our Redemption, with the *First* and *Second* Persons.

But it must needs also have made *another* Part of our Saviour's Humiliation, that he enjoy'd not the assisting and comforting Presence

fence of the *Holy Spirit* neither, without any Intermiſſions. And that he did not is apparent ; ſince, as he wanted it upon the *Croſs*, when he cry'd out, *O God my God, why (or rather how) haſt thou forſaken me ?* So in His Agony in the Garden, *There appear'd an Angel to him from Heaven, ſtrengthening him.* So that an Angel now ſupply'd the Abſence of the *Holy Ghoſt*. And I need not ſay, that he was without the Supports of both the *one* and the *other*, in ſome Part of his horrible Agony.

And this leads me to affirm of this *Union*, that his Senſe of Pain was never the leſs quick by means thereof ; nor his Nature ever the leſs tender or impreſſible ; nay, it appears to have been *more* ſo than *other* Mens.

I should be afraid of being thus positive in Points of so high a Nature, were not all this most exceeding plain from Divine Revelation. And I have gone no farther in any Speculation, than *Holy Scripture* leads me.

And by what hath been observ'd, well might our Lord propose himself as our imitable and encouraging *Example*: That given by him being an Example as of a *Man*, so of a *Man like our selves*; *who was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin*. As the Apostle tells us, *Hebr. 4. 15.* Nor do the Assistances we have (or may have, if it be not long of our selves) more fall short of *those* which our *Lord* had, than did *His Work* in the World, and *His Trials* transcend and excel *ours*.

I have no more to say, till I come to a Practical Application of what has been discoursed) to the former Part of these Words of our Lord, *I came forth from the Father, &c.* But I refer the Reader for farther Satisfaction (if he can need it) to the 8th Chapter of the First Book of the excellent Dr. *Henry More's Explanation of the great Mystery of Godliness*: Which I never happen'd to look into, till after I had penned what I thought sufficient upon that Part.

And I have suffer'd my self to be very ignorant of what is written upon this Subject, being resolv'd to deliver my own *freest* Thoughts, not in the least byas'd one Way or other, by the Deference I have for the Judgment of any Mortal; and much less influenced by the *bare* Reputation,
and

and great Names, that any have
acquir'd in the Learned World.

But, as Mr. *Chillingworth* saith
exultingly, *The Bible, the Bible,*
is the Religion of Protestants, so say
I, The Bible is the *only* Foun-
dation on which we build our
Perswasion of the Truth of *this*
Doctrin: And, above *all*, the
Declarations of our blessed *Savi-*
our himself; which are too plain,
expres, and emphatical to need
to be beholden to any Fathers of
them *all*, or other Expositors, to
be understood.

And 'tis worthy of our Obser-
vation, that there's no one Text
in the Bible which so much as
seems to thwart the plain Sense
of those Scriptures that have
been produced; at least not one
that I know of. And what con-
troverted Point is there in Reli-
gion, of which we can say the
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like? Which may make us justly wonder, how *This* ever came to be disputed among any who make the *Holy Scriptures* their Rule of Faith.

And so from what our Lord declareth of His *Coming into the World*, I proceed,

Secondly, To what He subjoyns concerning His *Leaving* it. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World: And again I leave the World, and go to the Father.

It follows in the next Verse, *His Disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no Proverb, or Parable*; there is no Figure, no Obscurity in these, with the foregoing, Words.

But *this* had been no such plain speaking, as to the former Part of this Declaration, no, nothing like it, if these Words are not

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to be understood according to the Obvious, the literal or natural Sense of them ; as the Words *following* are. If the *same* *Man-Jesus* who was now going to the Father, did not likewise come forth from Him.

And whereas the Disciples may be supposed to *this* time to give Credit to their Ancient Tradition of the *Pre-existence of Souls*, (and especially of the Soul of their *Messias*) as it is very probable they did *not long before*, from *John 9. 2.* they then could not be under the least Doubt concerning their Lord's Meaning in these Words, if it were possible they could have been *otherwise*. But if they were *misled* in this their taking them, in their at first hearing most evident and natural Sense, contrary to His Meaning, is it not to be thought

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He would have set them Right, and given it in other Words? As He told them, *John 6. 63.* the true Sense of *another* of His Sayings, *viz. My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.*

Now as to our blessed Lord's fulfilling this His Saying, *Again I leave the World, and go to the Father* (or *I will* do this, and that in a very short time) would we know what *Evidence* we have of this, we shall find it as unquestionable, as *that* of His *Death*, and *Burial*, and *Resurrection*; all which he *foretold* as He did His *Ascension*: And never had Matters of Fact clearer or fuller Evidence; nor *so* abundant, as hath these Two last.

To give, as briefly as may be, the Substance of the Evidence we have for *this last of all.*

First,

First, We have a very particular *History* of our Lord's Ascension, wherein are these *Six* Circumstances.

1. The precise *Time* when He ascended, *viz.* just Forty Days after His Resurrection, *Acts* 1. 3. And therefore on the *Thursday*, which our Church observes in Commemoration thereof, after the Example of the *Primitive* Church.

2. The *Eye-Witnesses* of his Ascension, *viz.* the Eleven Apostles.

3. His *Discourse* with them at the Time of His Ascending. We may see *both* these, *Acts* 1. 4, &c. But we will first read the *Three* foregoing Verses. *The former Treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the Day on which He was taken up, after that He, thro' the Holy Ghost, had given Com-*

mandment to the Apostles whom He had chosen. To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His Passion, by many infallible Proofs; being seen of them Forty Days, and speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. It follows, And being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with Water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many Days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel? viz. the Kingdom foretold by the Prophet Daniel, Ch. 7. 18, 27. the Fulfilling of which was expected from the *Messias*. And He said unto them, it is not for
you

you to know the Times or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in His own Power. But ye shall receive Power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: And ye shall be Witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Part of the Earth. And when He had spoken these Things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a Cloud received Him out of their Sight. And St. Luke tells us in the last Chapter of His Gospel, Ver. 51. that while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven.

4. We have an Account of Two Angels appearing to them presently after, and declaring that He whom they saw ascending towards Heaven, was now actually in Heaven. Ver. 10. And while they looked stedfastly towards Heaven, as He went up, behold Two

Men stood by them in White Apparel (so the Angels are described who gave the first Notice of His Resurrection) which also said, Ye Men of Galilee, Why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner, as you have seen Him go into Heaven.

5. We are informed of the particular Place where our Lord ascended, viz. Bethany, Luke 24. 50. And He led them out as far as to Bethany: And He lift up his Eyes and blessed them, &c. And we are told in what Part of this Bethany He did this, viz. the Mount of Olives; the very Place in which He suffered His woeful Agony, Acts 1. 12. And so the same Place was a Witness to both His deepest Humiliation, and His glorious Exaltation.

Lastly,

Lastly, We are given to understand the particular Part of Heaven, to which He ascended; that is the highest Part of the highest Heaven; that in which God the Father is most gloriously present, where his Throne is; and that our Lord is set at his Right-hand, or the Right Hand of his Throne. So then, saith St. Mark, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into Heaven, and sat on the Right-hand of God, Ch. 16. 19. And the Author to the Hebrews saith, He is set down at the Right-hand of the Throne of God, Ch. 12. 2. And Ch. 8. 1. That he is set on the Right-hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens.

And this speaks his being ascended to the utmost Heighth of Happiness: *At thy Right-hand, saith the Psalmist, are Pleasures for*

for evermore : And of Honour and Glory, as King Solomon honoured the Queen his Mother, by setting her on his Right-hand : And of Power also and Dominion ; wherefore our Lord himself called the Right-hand of God, he was upon his Advancement to, *the Right-hand of Power*, Mark 14. 62. And he said to his Apostles, that *all Power was given unto him in Heaven and on Earth*, Mat. 28. 18.

And with respect to those Three, the highest Pitch of Blessedness, and Glory and Power, the Apostle saith, *Hebr. 1. 3, &c.* That when he had by himself purged (or made an Atonement for) our Sins, he sate down on the Right-hand of the Majesty on high : Being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they, &c. And Ver. 13. But to which

which of the Angels said he at any time, sit on my Right-hand, &c. And the Apostle explaineth the Meaning of God's setting Christ at his own Right-hand in the Heavenly Places, by his setting him far above all Principalities and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not onely in this World, but also in that which is to come. And by God's putting all Things under his Feet, and making him to be Head over all Things to the Church. Or, for the unspeakable Advantage of his Church, Eph. 1. 20, &c.

This is the *History* of our Lord's Ascension, with the several Circumstances thereof. But the Circumstance on which the great Weight of *Evidence* is to be laid is our *Second*, viz. The Apostles being *Eye-Witnesses* of it.

They

They were *not* so of our Lord's *Resurrection*, because there was not the least Need of their seeing him *rise*, since they all saw him *after* he was risen (even for *Forty Days* together) and *felt* him, and *discoursed* with him, and did *eat* and *drink* with him. But it was necessary they should be *Eye-Witnesses* of his *Ascension*, because they were not to see him *after* he was ascended, to satisfy the World, that they knew him to be so.

But our Infidels think this Evidence not comparable to what it would have been, had a considerable Number of Christ's chiefest *Enemies* been also Eye-Witnesses of his *Ascension*, or at least of his being *risen*. And since they were onely his *Friends*, who profess'd to be so, there was not *that* Evidence to found our Belief upon (our Be-

Belief of such extraordinary and most wonderful Events) as we might have just Reason to expect.

But, as it is the Heighth of prophane Impudence, to say *what* Evidence would best have become God Almighty to vouchsafe us in this Case, and to dare thus to prescribe to boundless Wisdom and infinite Goodness, so nothing is more apparent than that God did most *justly*, and therefore as *wisely*, in not necessitating *their* Belief whether they would or no, who would not be convinced by all our Lord's Miracles, joyned with His most holy Life and Doctrine, that He was no Impostor ; but, instead of being so, followed Him with the most horrible Calumnies, and obstinately shut their Eyes against the clearest Light.

Nay,

Nay, it might have been very well expected, that such inveterately malicious Wretches, after they had put Him to so shameful and cruel a Death, would not have given Credit to their own Eyes, but have said and thought that their Sight was imposed upon, and that it was not *he* but the *Devil* in his Likeness. Might not *this* have been even concluded from *those* who had, when they saw that nothing was to be objected against the *Reality* of His casting out unclean Spirits, imputed it to a Confederacy with the Prince of them?

But it will appear, that the Testimony of the *Eleven* Apostles as *Eye-Witnesses*, is the most powerful Evidence imaginable of our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, if we consider how it was enforced. Nay, St. *Paul* saith,

saith, 1 Cor. 15. 6, &c. that as he was first seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve (or of that Number who a little before was Twelve) so, after that He was seen of above Five Hundred Brethren at once (viz. in Galilee, where they were appointed to meet him by an Angel, Math. 28. 7.) of whom the greater Part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles : And last of all, saith he, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. But they were the Apostles who, out of this great Number, were chosen to be the special Eye-Witnesses ; and, I say, their Evidence was the most powerful that could be given, considering how it was enforced. Which leads me to shew,

Secondly,

Secondly, That incomparable Evidence was given by our Lord, within a few Days after his Ascension, of his Apostles giving an infallible Testimony thereunto, by His *sending the Holy Ghost upon them*. When he was going to ascend, He said to his Apostles, *Luke 24. 49. Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you* (the Promise he had made by *Joel*, and several other of the Prophets) *but tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye be indued with Power from on High*. And himself made them the same Promise *before his Death*: Especially in *John 16. 7, &c.* And, according to his Command, they *did* immediately after he had left them, return to *Jerusalem*, as we have seen, and *there* they waited in Expectation of the Fulfilling of this Promise. And their

their Patience was exercis'd but just *Ten Days*. For on the Lord's Day Sen-night after, *viz. Whit-Sunday*, they had the full Performance. This we find, *Acts 2. beg. And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come* (or the *Fiftieth* from the Passover, and our Lord's Resurrection) *they were all, with one accord in one Place; and suddainly there came a Sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty Wind, and it filled all the House where they were sitting: And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of Fire, and it sate upon each of them; And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak, with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance, &c.*

And when the vast Multitude of *Jews* and *Profelytes*, who were assembled at *Jerusalem* from many Countries by Means of *this*

solemn Feast, were *confounded* at hearing these unlearned Men speaking their own Languages; and declaring in them *the wonderful Works of God* (viz. chiefly His raising up his Son *Jesus*, and receiving Him up into Heaven) and had heard St. *Peter's* most powerful Sermon hereupon, there were about *Three Thousand* of them, who *gladly received his Word, and were baptized*, V. 41.

And, as speaking all sorts of Languages, for the Preaching of the Gospel in all Nations, so working the most wonderful Miracles, was now a Gift of the Holy Ghost. And they also *presently* fell to the Exercise of *this* Gift in the Name of *Jesus*.

Their *First* Miracle was the Cure of a *Cripple* of *Forty* Years old, who was known to be so from his Mother's Womb. This
was

was done at the Gate of the Temple, before a great Concourse of People: The Success of which was *more* admirable, than was *that* of speaking all Languages ; for there were converted upon it, with St. *Peter's* Second Sermon following, and applying it to the Resurrection and Ascension of *Jesus*, no fewer than about Five Thousand Souls, *Chap.*

4. 4.

Such sober and vertuous Men as the Apostles, had deserved to have great Credit given them, upon their *bare* solemn declaring, what they had beheld with their own Eyes ; but it being of infinite Importance to the World, that this their Testimony should have the highest Degree of Certainty, God's own Hand sealed it in this wonderful Manner.

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And

And there were many *other* supernatural Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which not only the Apostles, but Believers in *common* were indued with, more or less, upon the same Design; and which did not quite cease till Christianity became the Religion of the whole *Roman Empire*, viz. for about Three Hundred Years. But the *Speaking of all Languages*, and *working the mightiest Miracles*, were Gifts which the *Apostles* had most peculiarly conferr'd upon them. We have seen that their Lord told them at *parting*, That *they should be Witnesses to Him to the very uttermost Parts of the Earth*; Witnesses to His Resurrection and Ascension, and therefore to the Truth of His whole Gospel. And so they were by means of their miraculous Gifts, backing their Ministry, by themselves and
 their

their Successors, with most astonishing Success.

Thirdly, We may add hereunto, The marvellous *Resolution* and *Courage*, wherewith the Apostles witnessed their Lord's Resurrection and Ascension (as great Cowards as they had been *before*, and especially *St. Peter*) to the Faces of his Crucifiers and most deadly Enemies, and of the Rulers themselves : Together with their enduring, with no less Joyfulness than Patience, the most cruel Usage for their adhering to their Testimony ; and at *last* their Sealing it with their Blood : And it would take up a long time to shew what indefatigable Labours, and what Calamities and unexpressible Trials *St. Paul* particularly underwent before his Martyrdom.

Fourthly, I might instance in *Three* most wonderful *Appearances* of our Lord after His Ascension.

The *First* to St. *Stephen*, while they were *stoning* him.

The *Second* to *Saul* in a *Light* from *Heaven*, which he said was *above the Brightness of the Sun*, when he was in his full *Carreer* of persecuting the poor *Christians*; a *Voice* saying to him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* And, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, &c.* Which *Light* struck him to the *Ground*, and bereft him of his *Sight*; which was again miraculously restored by our Lord, and he upon the *whole* made of a fierce *Persecutor*, even the *most* zealous *Preacher* of his *Gospel* of *all* the *Apostles*.

The

The *Third* Appearance was to St. *John*, in his Banishment in the Isle of *Patmos*, in a very glorious Form. Upon which *he fell at his Feet as dead*; and upon his Reviving, had *these* Words said unto him, *Fear not, I am the First and the Last. I am he that liveth and was dead*; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen. And have the *Keys of Hell and of Death*.

Fifthly, I might also instance in the not to be parallell'd Vengeance He took of the most obdurate *Jews*, about Thirty Seven Years after His Ascension; when He brought their own horrible Imprecation upon their Heads, viz. *His Blood be upon us, and upon our Children!* And *this*, after He had again and again forewarn'd them of it, and once with *Tears*. And 'tis surprizing to observe, what an Agreement there

is between *Josephus*, the *Jew*, his History of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Calamities that then befel that People, with several of the Circumstances ; and our Lord's Prediction of them in the 24th *Chap.* of *St. Matthew's Gospel*. Then did He give those his incurable Enemies, who would not cease from *Rejecting the Counsel of God against themselves*, nor a Whit abate of their Diabolical Enmity to His blessed Son, a woeful Specimen of his now having *all Power in Heaven and on Earth committed to Him*.

These farther Evidences, I say, I might lay before you ; but, as very strong as they are, (especially what relates to *St. Paul's Conversion*) yet being much inferior to our *Second*, I will enlarge no farther on this great Argument, but proceed to

The

*The APPLICATION of this
Discourse.*

First, **D**ID the *Man* Christ Jesus, who *when He left the World* did go to the Father, come forth from the Father, when He came down into the World? Did He come down from Heavenly Bliss and Glory into this low, *dunge-only* Part of the Universe, compar'd with the Cœlestial Mansions, and that most *willingly* and *gladly*, as we have seen, for the Recovery of lapsed Mankind? Then let our Thoughts dwell much upon it to the Winding of them up to the highest Admiration, and to the Affecting of our Souls with most passionate Thankfulness and Love to Him.

We

We having received this Doctrine from our Lord's *own* Mouth in the most exprefs Words, how *great* a Regard is to be had unto it! How affecting a Sense ought we to have of it! How *marvellous* should it be in all our *Eyes*! That His blessed Soul should, for our Sake, descend from Heaven; take a Body of Flesh in the ordinary Way; take it from a *Woman*, tho' not impregnated by a *Man*; and afterward pass thro' the State of Infancy, Childhood and Youth, to compleat Manhood; should live till *now* in Subjection to his Mother and the poor *Carpenter* her Husband; and

Justin Martyr. work at his *Trade* too, as the Tradition is, especially in making *Ploughs* and *Yokes*: And should to the End of his Days here (which amounted to *Thirty* and *odd* Years) be

be conversant with *Sinners*, and *most* intimately associate himself with People of very mean Quality ; and perform *once* the meanest of Offices to them, the *Washing* of *their Feet*, to give them an Example of profound Humility ; and should be all along in wretched outward Circumstances ; should *endure the Contradiction* of *Sinners* against himself, meeting continually with the basest Returns for innumerable great Benefits ; as miraculously healing their Sick, giving Sight to their Blind, and Limbs to their Lamé, dispossessing others of Devils, and even raising some of their Dead, and still *going about doing Good*, both to Mens Souls and Bodies. And should be so given up to the Power of the Devil, that he hoised him up upon a *Pinacle* (or Battlement) of the Temple ; and
again

again upon an exceeding high Mountain, to disquiet his Mind, and ruffle his Spirits (and when he might conclude his Body to have been exceeding weak with a miraculous Fasting) with violent Temptations ; and on the Mountain with so *horrid* a one, as to give to *himself* Divine Worship. To which he could surely be onely excited by his desperate Malice, not by the least Hope of prevailing upon Him. Which I think more probable than the Opinion of divers of the Ancients, That the Devils were to this Time ignorant, that our Saviour was any thing more than a mere Man.

And that at last He should be worried by the *Powers of Darkness* into an unspeakably tormenting Agony ; *such* an Agony as forced Blood thro' the Pores of
His

His Body. Oh, what Matter do *these* Things afford for amazing Contemplation!

But we have not yet done. Add we to all that has been said of our Lord's Humiliations (omitting too many other Particulars to be reckon'd up) that he suffer'd the blackest of *Reproaches*; was calumniated as a Traitor, as the vilest of Cheats, as one that was *Himself* possess'd with a Devil, while He dispossest others, and that as a *Wizard* perform'd his mighty Works, although they were Acts of *Divine* Beneficence; and as the most impudently impious of all Blasphemers; that nothing might be wanting to make him the *ugliest* Monster of a Man that ever saw the Sun. And, in Conclusion, That he was apprehended with *Clubs* and *Staves*, being *betrayed* by
even

even one of his most highly obliged Companions, *then* mock'd with a *Purple Robe*, a *Reed-Scepter*, and a *Crown of Thorns*, buffeted, and most insolently insulted ; and, after all, nail'd alive to a Cross between Two Thieves, on which He was still scoffed at by the Spectators generally, instead of being pitied ; and so suffered a most ignominious and cruel, and cursed Death. And, *Lastly*, That he was made our Expiatory Sacrifice in his Death, and so substituted in the Place of wretched Sinners ; which was, as we have said, the greatest Humiliation of all, to this spotless and more than Angelically perfect *Lamb of God*.

Now certainly, I need not observe again, that his Personal Coming down from Heaven, and, in the most proper and natural Sense,

Sense, into all these most debasing and sorrowful Circumstances upon Earth, doth exceedingly magnifie his *Humility and Self-Denial*, and much enhanceth the Merit of his *Obedience* to his Heavenly Father, which He was so infinitely pleased with, as to reward it as gloriously as Divine Power and Goodness *could* reward it.

And as to his *Love and Compassion* to miserable Mortals, let us see what Use *St. Paul* makes of this our Doctrine to the Heightening thereof, 2 Cor. 8. 9. *You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your Sakes He became poor, that you through His Poverty might be rich.*

Nothing seems more unquestionable, than that the Apostle here speaks of the *Man Christ Jesus*,
or

or of Christ, as Man. For with what Propriety of Speech, or any thing *like* it, can it be said of God, that He *was* rich, as if He could ever have been otherwise? Or, that He became poor, who is infinitely Self-sufficient, and necessarily so; whose Essence is absolute boundless Perfection? And in what Sense can it be said of Christ, as *Man*, that He *was* rich, if He were never in a richer State, than he was in while on Earth; which was always extremely poor? And I will not say, He could not be in a richer State while he had *no* Being. And can that be said of *both* the Natures by the *Communication of Idioms*, which belongs to *neither*? To apply therefore this *Communication of Idioms* to *this* and such like Texts, (as particularly to *John* 17. 5.) looks like doing any thing

thing to help at a Dead-Lift :
 Since, *as* we have seen, these
 Words, *He was rich*, cannot be
 meant of Christ as *God*, *so* nei-
 ther can they be said of Him as
 he is *Man*, if he never *was* be-
 fore he came into this poor State.
 And if it may be said, *He was rich*
 as united to the Divinity many
 Ages *before* he was united, it will
 be as warrantable to say also,
 That *God* was poor from all Eter-
 nity, as a *Man* came in time to
 be united to him. But who
 dares adventure to talk thus ?

So that we have in those
 Words our Lord's pristine anci-
 ent State, *He was rich*, or most
 Blessed and Glorious. Yet *for*
your Sakes He became poor ; He ex-
 changed that State for the other
 Extream, *That you through His Po-*
verty might be made rich ; that you
 by means thereof may obtain

H

ever-

everlasting Happiness. Here is the Figure *Meiosis* Thrice, which expresseth a Thing abundantly short of what it is.

Now the Apostle saith, *You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and we do know it indeed; but he tells us, *Eph. 3. 19.* That it *passeth Knowledge*. We will take in the foregoing admirable Words from *Ver. 14.* *I bowe my Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named; That He would grant you according to the Riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with Might by His Spirit in the inward Man; That Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height. On which Words

Words Dr. Hammond does *thus* paraphrase, *That ye may understand and search into the Immensity of Christ's Love to us, best expressed by the several Dimensions of the Cross (as the Ancients are willing to understand them) being extended upward and downward, and on both Sides.* It follows, *And to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge; which is never to be fathomed, That ye might be filled with all the Fulness of God, &c. with all Divine Graces and Vertues.* And I cannot forbear *once* more to repeat it, That this our Doctrine adds *much* to the Unfathomableness, to the Incomprehensibility, of our Blessed Saviour's Love; and *so* makes it so much the more strong and vigorous a Motive, more and more to abound in our Love to *Him*, and therefore likewise in our Obedience.

Secondly, Have we such mighty Assurance of our Lord's having again *ascended up where He was before* ; To repeat his own Words, then,

1. Here is Matter of great Joy to all the obedient Disciples of our Lord : For His Ascension did not onely concern Himself, but it was design'd also for *their* unspeakable Advantage.

Those Words he spake to *Mary Magdalen* upon his Appearing to her presently after his Resurrection, do plainly speak *this*. They are *these*, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father ; but go to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God, John 20. 17.*

By the Way, I cannot think, that those very naughty Men should overlook the *former* Part
of

of this Verse, who read Scripture for no better Purpose, than to find Matter for Cavil. And I must grant, that *this* Translation too much exposeth those Words to the Scoffs of Infidels. For, as they may give Occasion to a *Reflection* upon our Saviour, for forbidding that most affectionate Disciple so much as to give Him a *Touch*, to oblige her with the more perfect Assurance that it was Himself that now appear'd to her, and no Spectre; when he quickly after offer'd himself to be handled by every one of the *Eleven*, and commanded *Thomas* to do it; so it looks much more oddly, that such a *Reason* as *this* should be given for that Prohibition, viz. *For I am not yet ascended to my Father*; when she must have touched him before his Ascension, or not at all.

And were those Words well render'd from the *Greek*, *what* Reply can be made? But the Sense of them may be truly expressed thus, *Do not take such fast Hold of me, as if thou wert afraid I would not afford thee another Sight of me; for I shall not yet ascend to my Father.* For *αγγίζω*, which signifies to touch, signifies also *Apprehendere*, and *Annecti*, to lay hold of, and to be fastned to a Thing. And that so it is to be understood here, is evident from the same Passage as recorded by St. *Matthew*, Chap. 28. 9. where 'tis said, *That this, with the other Mary, held Him by the Feet, and worshipped him.* And again, here is the *Hebraism*, which puts one Tense for another (which we said the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament do abound with) viz. the *Preterperfect* for the Future, *I am*
(I

(*I have*) not yet ascended, ἀναβήσω, for I shall not yet ascend. As we have in the next Words the Present Tense for the Future, I ascend for I will ascend to my Father, &c. but not immediately, as the Verse following that we cited in St. *Matthew* tells us, viz. Go tell my Brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. After they were told what St. *John* saith was *Mary's* Message, this was to be told them too.

It cannot well be thought, that *Mary*, in a Transport of Joy, could be content onely to offer to give her Lord a Touch ; no, she fell down on the Ground and worshipped him, laying hold of, or clasping about, his Feet : And therefore his Words amounted to such as these, Do not make this Ado, and spend Time unprofitably ; but go thy ways presently

H 4 with

with a joyful Errand from me to my Brethren, who are now in great Perplexity about me.

And now, as to the *Message*, since our Lord thought it not enough to send his Disciples word that he would ascend to *His* Father and *His* God, but he must also add, *your* Father, and *your* God, it plainly spake *their* Glorification to be likewise in his Eye; and that he would be sure to take Care of it. And I need not stand to shew what Assurance he has given, that he is no less concern'd for *all* his obedient Disciples to the End of the World, than he was for *these*. And it ought to be well observ'd too, that he vouchsafed to call them *Brethren*, now his State of *Humiliation* was perfectly *over*, and he was *entring into his Glory*. This is a Condescension, I confess, we can't

can't much wonder at, while we reflect upon the many *other* we have consider'd, that are astonishing; but as this most affectionate Compellation, was a Demonstration of the Continuance of his Love in its *Height*, even in this wonderful Change of his Condition, what an endearing, and how comfortable a Consideration is *this*!

But we stand in no Need of *Inferences*, tho' never so plain, to assure us, that our Lord's Ascension is Matter of great Joy to us; of great Joy upon *our own*, as well as upon *His* Account; for our Lord told his Disciples in *express* Words, That he would ascend for their infinite Benefit and Advantage. *This* he doth *John* 14. 2, 3. *In my Father's House are many Mansions* (abundance of higher and lower Stories) *if it were*
not

not so, I would have told you (I love you too well to let you flatter your selves with vain Hopes) I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again and receive you to my self, that where I am (or shall be, the Present for the Future) you may be also.

And therefore the Apostle calls *Jesus* the *Forerunner*, or *Harbinger*; and saith, That he is entered into Heaven for *us*. *Hebr. 6. 20.* He saith, *Ver. 19.* Which Hope (the Hope set before us in the 18th) we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast; and which entreth into that within the Vail (the Holy of Holies) whither the Forerunner, as it follows, is for us entered, even *Jesus*, made an High Priest for ever, after the Order of *Melchisedec*.

As

As *Joseph* was, by the most extraordinary Providence of God, sent *before* to *Egypt*, to make Preparation for the Coming of his Father and Brethren, so *Christ* is gone before to Heaven, *as* to be crowned with Honour and Glory, for his tasting Death for every Man (as the Apostle speaks) so, to make way for those whom he is not ashamed to call his Brethren, *Hebr.* 2. 9, 11. And who these his Brethren are Himself tells us, *Matth.* 12. 50. upon his being told, That his Mother and Brethren desired to speak with him, He saith, *Whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother.* Or, he or she is as dear to me as either of these Relations.

2. I infer from the *Man Jesus* his being advanced to such Glory in Heaven, what inexpressible Honour is done in his Person to *our* Nature. It is in *this* Respect far above the Nature of the Angels ; as it was also *before* by means of the Union betwixt the Two Natures. And therefore how intolerable is it to vilifie it in *our selves*, by gratifying the Lusts of the Flesh, and inordinate sinful Appetites ; and so to sink it down into the Brutish, nay, into the Devillish Nature !

3. I infer from our Lord's being exalted to the Right Hand of God, and therefore to the highest Pitch of Power and Authority, as well as Bliss and Glory, that it is the most *desperate* Thing to refuse Subjection and Obedience to Him. Either not to acknowledge Him for our Lord
and

[III]

and Saviour, or, while we call Him *both*, willingly to disobey Him; as he expostulated with such as did so, in *these* Words, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I say?* Luke 6. 46.

Be we assured of it, That as God the Father, who hath so highly advanced His beloved Son, will not endure his being so affronted, nor *Himself* to be so neither: Such as *despise Him* (as our Lord hath told us) *despising Him that sent Him*; so He having all Power both in Heaven, and on Earth committed to *Him*, needeth not to complain of his disobedient Subjects to his Father; but he can himself make those who will not be wrought upon, by his most wonderful Methods of Grace towards them, dearly to repent it. And most dreadful are
the

the *Threatnings* He has pronounced against such; and that with the most *gracious* Design, that those who are of so disingenuous Natures, as not to be overcome by the most *exceeding great and precious Promises*, and the most endearing Expressions of *Love* imaginable, may be over-power'd by *Fear* to the Forsaking of their Sins, and becoming intirely obedient to his Laws. So that he will justifie himself abundantly to all the World, in the Execution of His Threatnings on all those, whose obstinate Impenitence shall compel him to it.

4. Is the *Man* Christ Jesus so exalted, as, among all other Powers, to have *that* of being the Judge of Quick and Dead committed to him; Or, in the Apostle's Words, *Acts* 17. 31. *Hath God appointed a Day, on which He will*

will judge the World in Righteousness, by the Man whom He hath ordained, &c.

Thence is to be inferr'd, That here is exceeding great Encouragement for all *sincere* Souls, who labour under their Infirmities as an heavy Burden, and disquiet themselves with melancholy Apprehensions upon the Account of them; tho' they dare not wilfully to transgress any Law of God : For we have so large an Account in all the Gospels of the tender and compassionate Nature of this *Jesus*, that all such may be most certain of finding him a very compassionate Judge, in *all* Cases that are compassionate. That He will be such a *Judge* as the Apostle saith he is an *High-Priest* (as hath been already observ'd) *who knoweth how to be touched with the Feeling of our*
In-

Infirmities ; having been in all Points tempted like unto us, yet without Sin.

And consequently, all our Circumstances shall be duly weigh'd by him, and Abatements shall be made for them. Nor shall any past *wilful* Sins rise up in Judgment against such, as have truly repented of them, and forsaken them. And none shall be shut out from Mercy, who obstinately persist not in their Impenitence, but timely return to their Father's House, and *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*. We may depend upon *this*, not onely from the Mercifulness of our Judge's Nature, but also from his solemn Declarations ; particularly from *that* in *John 6. 37.* *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* And what greater Assurance could he give *hereof*,
than

than He doth in His most affecting *Parable of the Prodigal Son*; wherein the Compassion of His Heavenly Father to even the *greatest* of repenting Sinners, is set forth to us in an astonishing Manner? And, to conclude this Discourse,

Lastly, Is our Blessed Saviour ascended into Heaven, from whence he came, *what a Motive is this to set our Affections on Things above!* If ye be risen with Christ, saith St. Paul, *seek those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God. Set your Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth.* For you are dead (you profess, by your being baptized into Christ, to be dead with Him to Sin and to the World) and your Life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ which is our Life shall appear, then shall ye
 I also

also appear with him in Glory, Col. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. It follows, *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the Earth, &c.* Your *Earthly* Members, your *Carnal* *Worldly* Affections; the *Gratifying* of them being infinitely unworthy of those who hope to be with *Christ*, and to behold the *Glory* which his *Father* hath given him; as he prayed that his faithful *Servants* may do, *John* 17. 24.

While we are at Home in the Body, saith the *Apostle*, we are absent from the *Lord*, how then can we love him, who is so amiable in himself, and hath so merited our most passionate Love, if we desire not, above all Things, to be present with the *Lord*? If we account not all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of *Christ Jesus* our *Lord* here; and in Comparison of the Excellency, the most

most transcendent Excellency, of the full Enjoyment of him for ever hereafter ?

The APPENDIX.

HAVING referr'd the Reader to the First Book of Dr. *More's Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness*, Chap. 8. For his farther Satisfaction concerning the Soul of the *Messiah's* Pre-existence; because the *English* Edition is scarcely to be light upon, I now transcribe the Main of what is there said.

He *first* sheweth ' what Sense
' the ancient Fathers had of that
' Notion, from their Inclination
' to believe, that in sundry of
' those Apparitions of Angels to
' the ancient Patriarchs, it was
' Christ himself that appear'd. To
' which he adds the Opinion of
I 2 ' some,

‘ some, That *Melchisedec*, who
 ‘ blessed *Abraham*, was Christ.

He then cites *Calvin* in his
 Readings upon *Daniel*, who saith,
 ‘ *In eo nihil est absurdi, quod Christus*
 ‘ *aliquam Speciem Humanæ Naturæ*
 ‘ *exhiberet, antequam manifestatus*
 ‘ *est in Carne.* There is no Absur-
 ‘ dity in thinking, that Christ did
 ‘ exhibit some Appearance of his
 ‘ *Humane Nature*, before he was
 ‘ manifested in the *Flesh*.

He saith, ‘ The *Angel* that led
 ‘ the *Israelites* into the Land of
 ‘ *Canaan* was Christ, seems plain-
 ‘ ly asserted, 1 Cor. 10. 9. Neither
 ‘ let us tempt Christ, as some of
 ‘ them tempted him, and were de-
 ‘ stroyed of *Serpents*: But Christ is
 ‘ a Complexion of the *Humane*
 ‘ *Nature* with the *Divine*. Con-
 ‘ sider also *Hebr.* 11. 26. which
 ‘ seems to imply, That the Soul
 ‘ of the *Messiah* was a Patron
 ‘ and

‘ and Protector of the Holy Seed
 ‘ betimes ; and had a peculiar
 ‘ Relation to the *Jews* above any
 ‘ other Nation. And therefore
 ‘ when he came into the World,
 ‘ He might the more properly be
 ‘ said *to come unto his own, tho’ his*
 ‘ *own knew him not,* John. 1. 11.

He saith farther, ‘ That the
 ‘ Soul of the *Messiah* was in Be-
 ‘ ing before He took upon him
 ‘ our Flesh, the most easie and
 ‘ natural Meaning of 1 *John* 4.
 ‘ 2. seems also to import. Here
 ‘ St. *John* seems to cabbalize, as
 ‘ in several Places of the *Apoca-*
 ‘ *lipse*, that is, to speak in the Lan-
 ‘ guage of the Learned of the
 ‘ *Jews* : For the genuine Sense
 ‘ is, *Every Spirit that confesses, that*
 ‘ *Jesus is the Messiah come into the*
 ‘ *Flesh, or into a Terrestrial Body,*
 ‘ *is of God* ; which implies, that
 ‘ *he was* before he came into it.

‘ Which is the Doctrine of the
 ‘ *Jews*, and expressed so exactly
 ‘ according to their Sense, that
 ‘ themselves could not have ut-
 ‘ ter’d it more naturally and fig-
 ‘ nificantly.

‘ Again, He being happily (be-
 ‘ fore the Generation of Men and
 ‘ the Peopling of the Earth) *the*
 ‘ *Messiah Elect* (as I may so speak)
 ‘ united also with the *Logos*, and
 ‘ resplendent with Cœlestial Glo-
 ‘ ry and Beauty among the An-
 ‘ gels in Heaven ; this *Hypothesis*
 ‘ will give a very easie and natu-
 ‘ ral Sense to fundry Places of
 ‘ the New Testament, that other-
 ‘ wise seem very obscure, as that
 ‘ of *Philipp.* 2. 6, 7, 8. For it hath
 ‘ rack’d many Mens Minds to
 ‘ conceive, how an *Exinanition*
 ‘ [or *Emptying*] of himself, can
 ‘ belong to the Eternal and Im-
 ‘ mutable God, by becoming Man,
 ‘ which

' which the Text seems to point
 ' at. But it may very properly
 ' belong to the Soul of the *Mes-*
 ' *siah*, who was yet truly God
 ' by a Physical Union with the
 ' Godhead. So likewise, *John* 17.
 ' 4, 5. *I have glorified Thee upon*
 ' *Earth, for which Purpose I was*
 ' *sent down hither. And now, Fa-*
 ' *ther, bring me back again to thy*
 ' *Self, that I may again enjoy that*
 ' *Glory which I had with Thee in the*
 ' *Heavens before the World and Ge-*
 ' *nerations of Men were.* This is
 ' the easie Meaning of those
 ' Two Verses.

' Again, *John* 6. 38. and *Chap.*
 ' 3. 31. And yet clearer, *Chap.*
 ' 16. 28. But clearest of all, *Chap.*
 ' 3. 13. Where, speaking of His
 ' *Ascension* (and that was *Local*)
 ' He mentions also His *Descension*,
 ' which it is most natural to un-
 ' derstand in the same Sense. To

‘ all which we may add *John*
 ‘ 6. 26.

I give not the Words, because all these Texts, with more, are made use of in the Discourse.

And thus much of what this eminent *Author* saith upon this Argument in the foresaid Chapter.

I shall make an End when I have bestow'd a few Lines (which some Parts of the Discourse mind me to do) upon a *Crew* among us, whose due Epithet I will not give them, that mainly pride themselves in *Two* Words, *Mystery* and *Priest-Craft*. Whatsoever in Religion they would shew their Contempt of, must presently be one, or both, of *these*.

Now, what of *Priest-Craft* they can spy in any *genuine* Doctrine of the Gospel, and as it is taught by *our* Church, we desie them to shew :

shew : Tho' every Body may behold abundance of it in the *Romish* Mixtures. But the Religion of our Blessed Saviour is perfectly destructive of *all* Craft : Its Business being to make us *Israelites* indeed, in whom there is no Guile ; and to have our Conversation in the World, in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity. Nothing is more evident than *this*, to such as seriously consider it. And whosoever understands, what *must* be the Design of what is called *Religion*, to make it signifie any Good to the World, will readily grant, that whatsoever Doctrines are so contriv'd as to gratifie any Wordly Carnal Appetites, and to make Men *Self-Seekers* in the common Sense of the Word, must necessarily be Cheats and Impostures, and Points of downright Irreligion.

But

But as to the *other* of their *May-Games, Mystery*, we most freely own, that there *are* Mysteries in our Religion. The Word *Mystery* is taken in a Two-fold Sense in the New Testament: Sometimes for that which had been long hidden under Types and Shadows in the *Old*, but is by Christ, or his Apostles, fully reveal'd; as in *1 Cor. 2. 7. Rom. 16. 25.* and so now ceaseth to be a Mystery. At *other* Times, for that which hath too great Depth in it, for *Humane* Understandings to dive to the Bottom of it; as in *1 Cor. 15. 51. 1 Tim. 3. 16.* And the Mysteries *these* Gentlemen make Sport with are of *this* Nature. Whereas they make the Christian Religion much the more venerable, instead of offering a Temptation to any but the most despicable People, to despise it.

But

But if they were not as void of the Reason they are such high Pretenders to, as they are of Religion, they would be easily able to distinguish between being *contradictory* to, and being *above* our Reason; and *then*, whatever is flatly contradictory thereunto, they would not call a *Mystery*, but a *Nothing*: Like *Transubstantiation*, which contradicts not a few self-evident Principles of natural Reason, and even *Four* of our *Five* Senses. So that nothing but the mighty Power of the most exquisite *Popish* Priest-Craft could have kept it from being long, long since hooted out of the World; as nothing else could have ever brought it in. But the Doctrine which they (and *others* whom we may not call Infidels) do chiefly rank with *this*, viz. That of the Blessed *Trinity*, they
would

would do *well* to call a Mystery, so they could forbear to do it scoffingly. But let it be fairly represented in the Words of Scripture, and according to the Sense of the most ancient Fathers, right Reason will have no Quarrel with it.

As for the Doctrine which hath taken up the former part of the preceding Discourse, this Name *Mystery* is not due to it in the *former* of the foresaid Senses, since (as we have shewn) it was not hidden from the ancient *Jews*; and 'tis *scarce* due to it in the *latter*; at least, it is one of the *easiest* Mysteries to those, who know how to set Bounds to Curiosity, and will take a *Thus saith the Lord* for an Answer to all Objections, while it is evident that the Lord *doth* say it.

Yet,

Yet, nothing is more evident, than that God never said any thing in *such* a Sense, as plainly speaks a Contradiction to any undoubted Principle of Reason. But no one can say that this is the Case here.

And *this* is a Rule never to be called in Question, any more than we can doubt of our own Beings, That nothing can possibly be reveal'd by God, the unavoidable Consequence of which is *such* a Contradiction. The *Wise Man* calls *the Spirit of a Man* (or his reasoning Faculty) *the Candle of the Lord* : And there is no Difference between the manifest Dictates of Reason, and those in the Sacred Writings, but that *these* are outward, and the *other* inward Divine Revelations. So that 'tis as impossible they should contradict one the other, as that God
can

can contradict himself. And whatsoever Sense is given to any particular Place of Scripture, that overthrows any one of those Dictates, we are as certain of its Falsity, as we can be of the Divine Authority of the *Whole*. But let our Infidels, or their Sceptical Brethren, shew us, if they are able, how any one of our Articles of Faith doth so, as it is expressed in Holy Scripture, truly translated and *reasonably* interpreted.

But what *Idiots* do those make of themselves, who flee at any such Article, because *this* and natural Reason do not stand upon the same Level ; because it is not to be *thoroughly comprehended* thereby, or it can have but a superficial Apprehension, or Conception of it ! What strange Mortals doth this speak them, since for
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the self-same Reason it would become them too, to ridicule *Millions* of Things in *Nature* (nay, *every* Thing) no less than any thing in Religion.

Who, that hath any *Smattering* in Experimental Philosophy, is ignorant, that there is nothing he *sees*, *feels*, or *treads on*, but is a Mystery, so deep a Mystery, as does *non-plus* the most accurate Searchers into its Nature? And among *Animals*, the very least and most despised do afford Matter of no *less* (if not by means of their Minuteness, *greater*) Admiration, than the greatest and most noble. And the more curious a Pryer, with the Help of his *Microscopes*, into any of these Creatures any Man is, the more is he amazed and confounded.

Not

Not to soar so high, as to any of the astonishing *Cælestial* Bodies ; but confining our selves to the plain Objects of our *Senses* here below, tho' we are infallibly certain of the Existence of them all, and that they really *are*, yet to give an Account *how* they are *what* they are, or of their inward Essential Forms, we are infinitely at a Loss.

I will descend so very low, as to any Sort of *Compounds* ; we see that *this* Body is a Compound Substance (and *indeed* there is not a Body to be seen which is *not*) but how the Particles came to be knit and compacted so fast together, as to make it one natural Body or Substance, all Endeavours to be satisfied do end in an Assurance, that 'tis in vain to endeavour it. And we are fain to take up at last with the Power,
Wif-

Wisdom and Will of God in answering this Question ; and in solving innumerable the like Difficulties in Nature ; whereas the poor *Atheist* has nothing left him to say or think.

Not to mention neither the Mysteriousness of our *own Make* (which, one would think, should be better known to us, than any thing *without* us) those *Actions* of ours, which are the most common and trivial, if they be *free Actions*, are acknowledged by Philosophers of the best Reputation, to be unaccountable ; as even how by Will and Thought we can move a *Finger*.

Our doughty Men at Reasoning are positive in it, that the Notion of a Spiritual or immaterial Substance is a Contradiction, and therefore in *their* Sense a profound Mystery. But are they not

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as much aware that the Notion of a Bodily Substance is no *less* so too? If they be not, they must be acquainted with the *naked* Substance of Body; and let them pretend to be so, if they have the Confidence. But *we* dare tell them, That the naked Substance of a *Spirit* is as well known to *us*, as that of a *Body* can be to *them*: And that one of them is no better known to *any* than the other. That is, neither is at all knowable to us, but by its Properties; and the Properties of each are alike seen in their Operations and Effects.

The proper Accidents and Qualities of Bodies, are many of them known by our *Senses*: I say not *all*, since there are not a few Things in them which the *Aristotelians* call *Occult Qualities*; but, I say, *many* of them are known
by

by our Senses, such as their Dimensions, Divisibility, Figure, Colour, Sounds, Savours, Scents, Hardness or Softness, Roughness or Smoothness, &c. But 'tis Madness to say, that the *Substance* of a Body consists of these or the like Things; or that they are any other than *Properties*, or other *Accidents*, of the Substance.

But *who* knows not, that the Properties of *Spiritual* Substances, such as our *Souls*, with their Operations and Effects, are as clearly discern'd by our *Minds*, and our *inward* Sensations, and as infallibly known as those of *Bodies* are by our outward Senses? Such as the Powers of Thinking, Remembering, and Reminiscence; of Invention, of Willing, of Deliberation, of Chusing, of Judging, of Discerning of Differences between Things which seem the

very *same* to Sense or Fancy; and the Powers of moving *Bodies*, and of *Self-Motion*, &c. Who knows not, I say, that *these* are altogether as certainly known, as those other Properties, &c. of *Bodies*? And such as perceive not that they can't belong to *Bodies*, we may be tempted to pronounce of *their* Souls what *Plato* does of the Souls of *Swine*, That *they serve onely for Salt to keep their Bodies from stinking*; or to but little better Purpose.

Again, the Doctrine of God's Immensity, or Omnipresence, how incredible doth it sound in those Mens Ears! Whereas a little *Thinking*, were they capable of it, might convince them, that 'tis as accountable how an infinitely perfect Being should be present throughout His whole vast Creation at the same time, as how
our

our Souls should be so present in all the Parts of their Bodies, than which nothing is! more apparent.

And once more, The Doctrine of the Union betwixt the Divine and Humane Natures in Christ, which St. *Paul* sets in the Front of his *Six* Parts of the *Great Mystery of Godliness*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. what *Non-sense* would those Men make of it! Whereas the Union betwixt our Souls and Bodies is as incomprehensible.

As for those that have brought themselves to such a Pass, as to say we are nothing *but* Body, to what Purpose is talking to *them*? But to those who are not so miserably sunk, I will venture to say further, That it seems, in one Respect, the greater Difficulty of the Two, to comprehend the Possibility of this *latter* Union,
viz.

viz. between a Soul and its Body : This being an Union between *Two*, which are of most *unlike* and *contrary* Natures, or Properties ; for *so* a Spirit and a Body are : But *that* of the Soul of our Saviour with the Divinity, is an Union between *Two Spirits* ; and therefore between *Two agreeing* in their Natures as *such* ; tho' the one is infinitely superior to the other. And how Spirits can affect Spirits is nothing so hard to imagine, as how Spirits can affect Bodies, and Bodies Spirits ; and mutually act upon one another, as we know they do by our *Feeling*, and know nothing more certainly by all our Senses together.

But 'tis endless (as has been intimated) to go on in Instances of Things in Nature, which Humane Understandings were never made

made to penetrate ; or to have more than an extremely shallow Inspection into the most contemptible of them.

Whata *Sort* of Things then are they in their own Eyes, who will take nothing for Truth upon God's bare Word ? Or, which amounts to the same thing, will not have God to say what there is full Evidence of His having said it, if their Reason, forsooth, cannot master it ; if it be not an adequate Object thereof ? When, if they will be but of a *Piece* with themselves, they should affirm too, That God Almighty never *did*, as well as never *said*, any thing, which does give them any insuperable Difficulty. And this must *end* in saying, God has *done nothing* : Which 'tis likely they could well enough away with, but that it cannot serve their
their

their Turn, since the plain *Eng-
lish* of it is, there *is* nothing, be-
cause there is not any thing, be
it Spirit or Body, but contains
(as hath been shewn) too deep
Mysteries for *them*, or any of us
all, to fathom. And consequent-
ly *themselves* are nothing, after
all, which they as *little* under-
stand as *any* thing, I was about
to say less. And happy 'twould
be for them were they nothing,
or could become nothing, if they
never come to a sober Mind:
Which God grant they may be-
fore it be too late!

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAge 45. l. 18. for *All-Being* r. all Being. P. 56.
l. 13. for *Laws* r. Law.